

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 60

Introduced by Assembly Member Santiago

April 28, 2015

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 60—Relative to education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 60, as introduced, Santiago. Education: students with disabilities.

This measure would recognize the necessity of a more respectful and humanistic view of students with disabilities, and would affirm that state policies and procedures should use People First Language to the greatest extent possible.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, All students deserve to be treated with dignity and
2 respect; and
3 WHEREAS, About 686,000 students with disabilities receive
4 special education services in California, comprising about 10
5 percent of the state’s public school enrollment; and
6 WHEREAS, Students with disabilities are sons, daughters,
7 sisters, brothers, friends, and neighbors; and
8 WHEREAS, The contributions of students with disabilities
9 enrich our communities as they live, learn, and share their lives;
10 and
11 WHEREAS, The language used to refer to students with
12 disabilities has a profound impact in shaping beliefs and attitudes
13 about these students, driving policies and laws, influencing our
14 feelings and decisions, and affecting students’ daily lives; and

1 WHEREAS, Old, inaccurate, and inappropriate descriptors about
2 students with disabilities perpetuate negative stereotypes and
3 attitudinal barriers; and

4 WHEREAS, When we identify or describe students with
5 disabilities primarily in terms of their disability or medical
6 diagnosis, we undervalue and stigmatize them; and

7 WHEREAS, Using thoughtful terminology can foster positive
8 attitudes about students with disabilities; and

9 WHEREAS, One of the major improvements in communicating
10 verbally or in writing with or about students with disabilities is
11 People First Language, which places the person ahead of his or
12 her disability; and

13 WHEREAS, People First Language is an objective form of
14 communication that eliminates generalizations and stereotypes by
15 focusing on the person rather than the disability; and

16 WHEREAS, We do not refer to a child with cancer as a
17 “cancerous child,” and similarly, we should not refer to a child
18 with autism as an “autistic child” or a child with epilepsy as “an
19 epileptic child”; and

20 WHEREAS, A recent report of California’s Statewide Task
21 Force on Special Education entitled, “One System: Reforming
22 Education to Serve All Students,” called for a unified, inclusive
23 educational system that supports all students based on individual
24 needs; and

25 WHEREAS, The manner in which written and verbal policies
26 and communications refer to students with disabilities can further
27 this important state educational goal; and

28 WHEREAS, The California Legislature recognizes the necessity
29 of a more respectful and humanistic view of students with
30 disabilities; now, therefore, be it

31 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
32 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature affirms that state policies
33 and procedures should utilize People First Language to the greatest
34 extent possible, especially those utilized by state and local
35 educational agencies; and be it further

36 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
37 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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